

12-18 Months Before

- Start researching potential destinations and specialties
- Read your medical school's elective handbook
- Attend medical school elective information sessions
- Speak to past students about their elective experiences
- Define your learning objectives (clinical, cultural, professional)
- Start saving - open dedicated elective savings account
- Research grant and funding opportunities
- Decide on a country
- Decide on a speciality

9-12 Months Before

- Finalise destination and specialty focus
- Contact host institutions or elective organizations
- Request application forms and requirements lists
- Submit medical school elective proposal form Request
- academic references from tutors Apply for DBS check if
- required (can take 8-12 weeks) Begin grant applications
- (many have early deadlines) Draft personal statement
- and CV for applications Research visa requirements
- and processing times Check passport expiry (needs 6+
- months validity) Apply to host institutions/hospitals
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6-9 Months Before

- Receive acceptance letter from host institution
- Get medical school approval for your elective
- Apply for visa/work permit
- Book flights (typically best pricing window)
- Research and book accommodation
- Join MDU/MPS for medical indemnity insurance
- Purchase travel insurance with medical cover
- Book travel health consultation appointment
- Begin vaccination schedule (some need multiple doses)
- Compile required documentation (copies of everything)

3-6 Months Before

- Complete all vaccinations and keep records
- Obtain antimalarials prescription if needed
- Receive visa/work permit
- Confirm accommodation booking
- Purchase any required medical equipment
- Inform bank of travel dates to avoid card blocks
- Set up international banking/travel money card
- Research local SIM cards or international phone plans
- Read about local culture, customs, and basic language phrases
- Follow up on any pending grant applications

1-3 Months Before

- Photocopy all important documents (passport, visa, insurance)
- Upload document copies to secure cloud storage
- Purchase any remaining items (clothing, toiletries, adapters)
- Confirm flight details
- Reconfirm accommodation booking
- Contact host institution to confirm start date and logistics
- Get any repeat prescriptions collected
- Purchase first aid kit and any specific medical supplies
- Arrange airport transfers/transport at destination
- Share detailed itinerary with family/friends
- Research local transport options and costs

2-4 Months Before

- Final check: passport, visa, all documents printed and digital
- Print insurance policy documents and emergency numbers
- Print host institution contact details and address
- Check baggage allowance and restrictions
- Pack suitcase (see packing list)
- Ensure all electronics are charged and working
- Purchase local currency or arrange exchange
- Download offline maps and translation apps
- Final reconfirmation with host institution
- Inform medical school of final travel plans

- Check FCO travel advice for your destination

Week Before

- Print boarding passes
- Weigh luggage to check within limits
- Pack carry-on with essentials and one change of clothes
- Inform landlord/flatmates of departure
- Final check of all medications and supplies
- Share emergency contact numbers with family
- Double-check flight times and departure terminal
- Charge all devices fully
- Pack adapter plugs and power banks

Essential Documents Checklist

- Passport (valid 6+ months beyond return)
- Visa/work permit Medical school acceptance letter Host institution acceptance letter Medical indemnity insurance
- certificate Travel insurance policy and emergency numbers
- Vaccination certificates (including Yellow Fever if applicable)
- DBS/police check Academic references CV and personal statement Proof of student status EHIC/GHIC card (if applicable)
- Prescription copies for medications Emergency contact list Flight confirmations Accommodation confirmation
- Local embassy contact details
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Packing List - Medical/ Professional

- Stethoscope

- Pen torch
- Name badge/hospital ID from home (for credibility)
- Professional clothing (smart trousers/skirts, shirts)
- Comfortable closed-toe shoes for wards
- Scrubs (if allowed and needed)
- Watch with second hand
- Small notebook and pens
- Clinical handbook/app (Oxford Handbook, etc.)
- Hand sanitiser
- Laptop/tablet for learning and documentation
- Phone and charger
- Power bank
- Universal adapter plugs
- Camera (if separate from phone)

Packing List - Personal

- Antimalarials (if required) - full course
- Personal medications with prescription copies
- Insect repellent (DEET 50%)
- Sunscreen SPF 50+
- Mosquito net (if needed)
- Water purification tablets or LifeStraw
- Basic first aid supplies (plasters, painkillers, antihistamines)
- Diarrhoea treatment (loperamide, rehydration salts)
- Appropriate clothing (modest if required)
- Comfortable casual clothes
- Rain jacket/layers
- Toiletries
- Nail Clippers
- Towel (quick-dry travel towel)
- Flip-flops for showers
- Padlock for lockers
- Copies of all documents in separate bag
- Small gifts for the host